

Exodus 12:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

Analysis

The phrase 'at midnight' emphasizes the precise timing of God's judgment—not gradual or uncertain, but sudden and exact. 'The LORD smote all the firstborn' fulfills the warned judgment (Exodus 4:23, 11:5). The comprehensive scope—'from the firstborn of Pharaoh...unto the firstborn of the captive...and all the firstborn of cattle'—demonstrates no Egyptian escaped, regardless of rank. Divine judgment is no respecter of persons.

Historical Context

Midnight placed the judgment in complete darkness, heightening terror. The death of Pharaoh's own firstborn (likely crown prince) personally broke Egypt's ruler. Captives' firstborn died despite having no power or responsibility for enslaving Israel.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the judgment falling on all ranks of society illustrate that sin levels humanity before God?
2. What does the sudden, midnight timing teach about judgment arriving when least expected?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹא	בְּמַעַן	כִּי	כָּל	יְהֹוָה	וְיִהְיֶה	כָּל	הַכְּהֶדְמָה	וְיִהְיֶה
H1961	And it came to pass that at midnight	H2677	H3915	the LORD	H3068	smote	H3605	
בְּאֶרֶץ	מִצְרָיִם	בְּכָרֶב	בְּכָרֶב	פְּרָעָה	בְּשִׁיאָה	בְּשִׁיאָה	פְּרָעָה	בְּשִׁיאָה
all the firstborn	in the land	of Egypt	all the firstborn	of Pharaoh	that sat	that sat	that sat	that sat
H1060	H776	H4714	H1060	H6547	H3427			
עַל	כִּסְאֵם	עַד	בְּכָרֶב	הַשְּׁבִיבָה	אֲשֶׁר			
H5921	on his throne	H5704	all the firstborn	of the captive	H834			
H3678		H1060		H7628				
בְּבֵית	בְּכָרֶב	בְּכָרֶב	בְּכָרֶב	בְּהַמְּתָה				
that was in the dungeon	H953	H3605	all the firstborn	of cattle	H929			
H1004			H1060					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 78:51 (References Egypt): And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:

Exodus 4:23 (Parallel theme): And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

Psalms 136:10 (References Egypt): To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:

Psalms 135:8 (References Egypt): Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.

Psalms 105:36 (Parallel theme): He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.

Numbers 8:17 (References Egypt): For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

Numbers 33:4 (References Lord): For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

Exodus 12:12 (References Lord): For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

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